

## § 18.75

(12) The place and date of the prehearing conference.

### § 18.75 Notification by interested persons.

Any person desiring to participate as a party shall notify the Director, by certified mail, on or before the date specified in the notice of hearing.

### § 18.76 Presiding officer.

(a) Upon publication of the notice of hearing pursuant to § 18.74, the Office of Hearings and Appeals shall appoint a presiding officer pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3105. No individual who has any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, shall serve as presiding officer in such proceeding.

(b) The presiding officer, in any proceeding under this subpart, shall have power to:

(1) Change the time and place of the hearing and adjourn the hearing;

(2) Evaluate direct testimony submitted pursuant to these regulations, make a preliminary determination of the issues, conduct a prehearing conference to determine the issues for the hearing agenda, and cause to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER a final hearing agenda;

(3) Rule upon motions, requests and admissibility of direct testimony;

(4) Administer oaths and affirmations, question witnesses and direct witnesses to testify;

(5) Modify or waive any rule (after notice) when determining no party will be prejudiced;

(6) Receive written comments and hear oral arguments;

(7) Render a recommended decision; and

(8) Do all acts and take all measures, including regulation of media coverage, for the maintenance of order at and the efficient conduct of the proceeding.

(c) In case of the absence of the original presiding officer or his inability to act, the powers and duties to be performed by the original presiding officer under this part in connection with a proceeding may, without abatement of the proceeding, be assigned to any other presiding officer by the Office of Hearings and Appeals unless otherwise ordered by the Director.

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(d) The presiding officer shall withdraw from the proceeding upon his own motion or upon the filing of a motion by a party under § 18.76(e) if he deems himself disqualified under recognized canons of judicial ethics.

(e) A presiding officer may be requested to withdraw at any time prior to the recommended decision. If there is filed by a party in good faith a timely and sufficient affidavit alleging the presiding officer's personal bias, malice, conflict of interest or other basis which might result in prejudice to a party, the hearing shall recess. The Director of the Office of Hearings and Appeals shall immediately determine the matter as a part of the record and decision in the proceeding, after making such investigation or holding such hearings, or both, as he may deem appropriate in the circumstances.

### § 18.77 Direct testimony submitted as written documents.

(a) Unless otherwise specified, all direct testimony, including accompanying exhibits, must be submitted to the presiding officer in writing no later than the dates specified in the notice of the hearing (§ 18.74), the prehearing order (§ 18.82), or within 15 days after the conclusion of the prehearing conference (§ 18.84) as the case may be. All direct testimony, referred to in the affidavit and made a part thereof, must be attached to the affidavit. Direct testimony submitted with exhibits must state the issue to which the exhibit relates; if no such statement is made, the presiding officer shall determine the relevance of the exhibit to the issues published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) The direct testimony submitted shall contain:

(1) A concise statement of the witness' interest in the proceeding and his position regarding the issues presented. If the direct testimony is presented by a witness who is not a party, the witness shall state his relationship to the party; and

(2) Facts that are relevant and material.

(c) The direct testimony may propose issues of fact not defined in the notice of the hearing and the reason(s) why such issues should be considered at the hearing.